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in the various business transactions, are now, by a few strokes of the pen, transformed into safe exchange, payable at any post office. A one or two-cent stamp is to be affixed to the lower right hand corner of the piece of money for the government fee, and the signature of the sender is to cross this stamp and thereby cancel it.

Each individual is his own clerk, and is required to do no waiting, nor subject himself to any inconvenience in procuring a safe form of transmissible money. This last feature, in itself, would mean a saving to the government of clerk hire, in the aggregate, of \$700,000 per annum, and while the total would be less on the individual transaction, an increase in the aggregate receipts of the government is expected, owing to the fact that practically all transactions by mail would, under the Post Cheque plan, pay a toll, whereas under the present plan, it is only the minority of such transactions that the government reaps any benefit from. A two-cent stamp is considered of less value by the average man than two pennies. He does not hesitate, by reason of the question of cost, to expend a two-cent stamp in making his money payable to the person to whom he remits it, and safe from thievery. Instances will occur where two or more Post Cheques will be required to exactly cover the sum desired; that is to say, if one wished to send \$2.50, a two-dollar Post Cheque or two one-dollar cheques would be required, together with a fifty-cent cheque.

It is proposed that the fee on the notes under \$1.00 shall be one cent each, and from one dollar to five dollars, two cents each. When these Post Cheques are received by commercial houses, they are indorsed and deposited in the bank, as is usual with government money orders, the bank clerk taking the receipts of the day, of that particular form, to the post office for redemption. The notes are then cancelled and the bank clerk or other individual presenting them for payment will receive new blank and negotiable Post Cheques in payment therefor. By this process, the notes are kept fresh and clean, as is the case with the Bank of England notes. An embargo is at present placed upon that portion of the business of the country which is represented by small remittances, and it is estimated that the volume of such business must exceed one billion dollars per year, of which the government handles but a small proportion in the way of government postal notes. It is reasonable to expect that if the embargo is removed, and convenience takes the place of difficulty and inconvenience in method, a very considerable increase will be the result.

C. W. POST.

THE CANADIAN PLEBISCITE.

THE plebiscite on prohibition recently taken throughout the Dominion of Canada was a new departure in Parliamentary procedure. There is no precedent for it in the annals of English legislation, and none that I am aware of in connection with Parliaments in other English-speaking countries patterned after the British model. In its earlier stages, the plebiscite movement also made an inroad on the usages and traditions of Government by means of Cabinets, and it would have led to a further inroad on these usages, or to a complete reorganization of the Laurier Cabinet, had the vote in favor of prohibition been sufficiently large to be accepted by the Government as a mandate for legislation.

Prohibition has long been agitated in Canada, and often discussed in the Provincial Legislatures and in the Dominion Parliament. Its advocates are not confined to either one of the political parties; although in recent years they have been most active and most successful in making their influence felt in the Liberal party. In 1889, when the Conservatives were in office at Ottawa, there was carried in the House of Commons a resolution declaring that it would be expedient to adopt prohibition when the public sentiment of the country was ripe for the reception and enforcement of such a measure. This non-committal resolution was of little practical value. Its chief significance now is that it shows that in the past the Conservatives, like the Liberals in more recent times, were afraid of the prohibitionists and indisposed to take any firm stand against them.

From 1889 to 1894, the prohibition question was more prominent in Provincial than in Dominion politics; and, in this period, five of the eight Provinces voted in the affirmative at plebiscites taken at either the Provincial or the municipal elections. But in no case did a plebiscite lead to a prohibition enactment. The Governments in the Provinces took the ground that for the Provinces to legislate for the total prohibition of the liquor trade would constitute an interference with the rights and powers of the Federal Government with respect to taxation. In 1893, the prohibition movement again became prominent in Dominion politics. Delegates representing the Liberal party in the several Provinces met in that year in National Convention at Ottawa, to draw up a programme on which the Liberals, then in Opposition, were to go into the General Election at that time thought to be impending.

The Ottawa Programme was patterned after the Newcastle Programme, of which much was then being heard in England. It embodied half a score of legislative demands to be acted upon should the Liberals secure a majority in the House of Commons. In the closing hours of the Ottawa Convention, after the principal business had been discharged, and many of the delegates had departed, the prohibitionists availed themselves of the opportunity to add an item of their own to the programme. It set forth that as public attention was at that time much directed to a consideration of the great evils of intemperance, "it was desirable that the mind of the people should be clearly ascertained on the question of prohibition by means of a Dominion plebiscite."

The General Election, thought to be imminent in 1893, did not take place until 1896. Between 1893 and 1896 there was no other National Convention of the Liberals, and no opportunity of revising the Ottawa Programme. Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his colleagues of the Liberal Opposition accepted it as their programme in the election, and after they were in a majority in the House of Commons at Ottawa proceeded to fulfill the pledges embodied in the Programme of 1893. In its turn the plebiscite pledge was fulfilled; for the prohibitionist leaders were alert, active and insistent from the time the new Government took office. It is now known that at least four members of the Laurier Government, including three who are of the Cabinet, are opposed to prohibition. But notwithstanding this opposition to prohibition on their part the Plebiscite bill was introduced into Parliament, as a Government measure, one for which the Cabinet was responsible; and its general lines were determined upon at a caucus of the Liberal members of Parliament.

At this stage the Anti-prohibition members of the Ministry offered no

opposition. They were active parties to the plebiscite bill, and to the measure appropriating \$250,000 to defray the cost of taking the vote. As soon, however, as the plebiscite campaign began, the Anti-prohibitionist members of the Ministry openly opposed prohibition; and from the platform, or through the press, counselled their supporters in the Quebec constituencies to vote in the negative at the plebiscite. One of these anti-prohibitionist Cabinet Ministers made the statement at a public meeting that, although the Government in a moment of weakness had agreed to the Plebiscite Act, there would be no prohibition law.

Only one member of the Cabinet took sides with the prohibitionists in the Plebiscite campaign. This was Mr. Fisher, the Minister of Agriculture, who while one of his colleagues of the Cabinet was telling the electors there would be no prohibition law, that in short the whole prohibition business was a humbug, was urging his hearers to vote for prohibition, and assuring them that the Government would pass a prohibition law, if the popular vote was in the affirmative. The Government, neither in the Plebiscite Act nor in the debates in Parliament which preceded it, had given the slightest intimation of what it would regard as an affirmative vote, one affording a mandate for legislation.

Since Cabinet Government, and Cabinet responsibility for legislation introduced or sanctioned by Government, became established in England, and was transplanted from England to British Colonies all over the globe, there never was such a spectacle as was witnessed in Canada during the closing weeks of the plebiscite campaign. The situation would have been more absurd had the vote in favor of prohibition been sufficiently large to demand a prohibition enactment. Then at least three members of the Laurier Cabinet would have had to resign, or Canada would have broken away entirely from the Cabinet system, as it exists in England. With four members of the Ministry denouncing prohibition and insisting on its impracticability, it is difficult to see how without a complete reorganization the Cabinet could have sanctioned a prohibition bill, and still remained a Cabinet within the accepted meaning of the term, as it is used in England, and as it has been hitherto accepted in British colonies with representative institutions like those of Canada.

A good definition of a Cabinet, and one generally accepted in England, is that given by Mr. Traill in his volume on "Central Government," in the "English Citizen" series. He there describes the Cabinet as necessarily consisting of "members of the legislature, of the same political views, and chosen from the party possessing the majority in the House of Commons; prosecuting a concerted policy, under a common responsibility to be signified by collective resignation in the event of Parliamentary censure; and acknowledging a common subordination to one chief minister."

The members of the Laurier Cabinet might have held the same political views when they sanctioned the introduction of the plebiscite bill to Parliament. They were then, no doubt, in agreement that an awkward campaign pledge had to be fulfilled, even if they were not in agreement as to the principle of prohibition. But for a ministry so openly divided on the question to have sanctioned a prohibition bill in response to a mandate given through the plebiscite, would have brought contempt on the principle of Government by Party, and made an inroad on it which it could hardly have survived.

From beginning to end there was an air of insincerity about the

plebiscite and a trifling on the part of the Laurier Government with representative institutions and long established constitutional usages. The Canadian people realized this, and rebuked it by refusing to take part in the farce that the Government was playing.

EDWARD PORRITT.

THE SCIENCE OF HOME MANAGEMENT.

THE home of to-day is different in almost every essential feature from the home of feudal times, to go no farther back. To this day, curious survivals of that time of man's fighting and woman's isolation linger in our current thought and speech, in spite of the incongruous circumstances of our lives. Then, in a very literal sense, a man's home was his castle; and the castle with its domains was woman's realm. There was no safety for the weak and defenceless except within the walls. Plunder and rapine and bloodshed reigned without. Very gracefully they wander in and out of the pages of the old romances of that time, those fair ladies, richly attired, gracefully veiled, riding their snow-white palfreys, escorted with much ceremony through their castle gates. But the castle walls have been leveled. The moat and drawbridge have disappeared.

A man may still speak metaphorically of doing battle with the world, in protecting those who are sheltered in his home; but, in point of fact, he ceased centuries ago to make fighting the chief business of his life, or to erect barriers between his family and the outside world. He builds his home against his neighbors' walls on both sides. He places at the door an electric button which is the *open sesame* to all who wish to enter. He joins forces with thousands of other men whose names, even, are unknown to him, to bring water from a common source into his home and theirs. Fuel, as well as water, is secured from common reservoirs by combination instead of by capture. The flaming torch is superseded by gas and electricity. The lord of the castle has so completely destroyed the isolation of his home, that he causes all the elements to pass freely through it and through thousands of other homes in connection with it, and so has inextricably interwoven the comfort or distress of his own family with that of the entire community.

In the old days, when a man's home was his castle, his wife watched him sally forth in the morning on his goodly charger, surrounded by his retainers, all in full armor; then she busied herself with the preparation of food which their comprehensive appetites would require on their return. She brewed "simples" from herbs, to be used in case of sickness. Spinning and weaving and knitting and netting and embroidery filled all her leisure hours. She was industrious, very industrious, this fair, serene, great-grandmother of ours. But her distaff and spindle are kept in a glass case in the museum now, and her great-granddaughter goes out into the world to traffic in great, close, crowded stores, buying the clothing for her household which was once so quietly made at home. She goes to market, too, and brings home vegetables and fruits whose names were never heard in the old castle days. She learns to cook, and produces such combinations of foods as were never dreamed of by her soundly sleeping ancestors. She is confronted all the time by spectres of disease and death which glide in through all the avenues of modern conveniences, and the "brewing of simples" is powerless to exorcise them. The human body has become sensitive with its